

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

Examiner Thomson

Serial # 10/648,888

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**AMENDMENTS****In the Specification:****Listing of Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Canceled)
2. (Canceled)
3. (Canceled)
4. (New) An assembly system for connecting a rifle barrel to an upper receiver portion of a rifle said assembly system comprising three separate pieces:

a barrel nut, said barrel nut being a generally cylindrically shaped piece defining a generally longitudinal bore extending from a first end along a longitudinal axis to a second end, said bore having a threaded first portion configured to connect with said upper receiver portion of said rifle, said bore also configured to hold a rifle barrel within said barrel nut, said barrel nut further configured to engage a lock nut upon an outer surface of said barrel nut;

a gas tube and hand guard support ring configured for non-engaging placement over said barrel nut, said support ring having a pair of tabs extending from said support ring, said tabs configured to allow said gas tube and hand guard support ring to align in a desired location upon said at least one portion of said upper receiver; and

a threaded lock nut configured for connection with said barrel nut, said lock nut having an outer surface generally free of projections thus providing an infinite number of locking

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positions, said lock nut configured to hold said support ring in a desired removable position upon said barrel nut.

5. (New) The assembly system of claim 4 wherein said gas tube and hand support ring further defines a groove configured to receive a gas tube therein.

6. (New) The assembly system of claim 4 wherein said barrel nut and said lock nut define at least one aperture.

7. (New) The assembly system of claim 6 wherein said holes are configured to receive a portion of a tightening tool therein.

8. (New) An assembly system for connecting a rifle barrel to an upper receiver portion of a rifle said assembly system comprising three separate pieces:

a barrel nut, said barrel nut a generally cylindrically shaped piece having an outer surface and defining a generally longitudinal bore extending from a first end along a longitudinal axis to a second end, said bore having a threaded first portion configured to connect with said upper receiver portion of said rifle, said bore also configured to hold a rifle barrel within said barrel nut, said outer surface of said barrel nut further comprising a plurality of circumvolving grooves, said circumvolving grooves configured to engage a lock nut thereupon ;

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a gas tube and hand guard support ring configured for placement over said barrel nut, said support ring having at least one portion configured to receive and hold a portion of a gas tube therein; and

a threaded lock nut configured for connection with said circumvolving grooves of said barrel nut, said lock nut having an outer surface generally free of projections thus defining an infinite number of locking positions, said lock nut configured to hold said support ring in a desired removable position upon said barrel nut.

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